A Research Proposal

On

EMERGENCE OF NEW WOMAN: A NEW FEMINISTIC APPROACH IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF MAHASWETA DEVI, MANJU KAPOOR, RUPA BAJWA AND SHOBHA DE

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INTRODUCTION

The synopsis entitled ***"Emergence of New Woman: A New Feministic Approach in The Select Novels of Mahasweta Devi, Manju Kapoor, Rupa Bajwa and Shobha Dee*** " is a serious attempt to explore the evolution of new woman in India after the partition. It is pertinent to note that throughout the history of mankind, from its Paleolithic civilization, goddess worship was widely prevalent, and families were matriarchal in their structure. But in the course of time civilization was overtaken by patriarchal dominance, and worship of the male deity became the dominant concept. In social set up, male ego acquired control and predominance in all spheres of social activities such as ritualistic performances, politics, religion and ethnic which in turn submitted women to the place of utter subordination, a secondary place; the insignificant.

The phrase *'new woman'* (Stevens 27) was coined originally by Henry James and intended by him to characterize American expatriates living in Europe. Women of affluence and sensitivity exhibited an independent spirit and were accustomed to acting on their own. The socio-political and economic forces brought about awareness in women who took up the new roles in the social, political and economic life. Women's lives at the end of the nineteenth century were changing dramatically on various fronts, most visibly so for daughters of middle and upper classes. Women were increasingly to be found in the previously male domains of business and professions. When Bernard Shaw wrote his famous play *Candida (1895)***,** the feminists were campaigning for equal rights of women and the "New Woman" was the key issue of the period that attracted the attention of the intellectuals.

In the post World War, the slang 'Flapper' was applied to a 'new breed' of young western women who revolted against the Victorian conventional set up and assumed new fashionable and modern roles in the society:

> *She wore short skirts, spent time and money on their bobbed hair, listened to jazz, and flaunted their disdain for what was then considered acceptable behavior….* (Rosenberg 25)

The period of Liberalism brought about the growth of the waves of "Flappers", the transatlantic outside the home and challenging women's traditional societal roles. They

advocated voting and women's rights and revolted against the Victorian gender roles and devotion to plain living and hard work. They discarded old rigid ideas about roles and embraced consumerism and personal choice. In fact a cultural war started in the post-Victorian era. Cultural exchange promoted the Flappers. The export of Jazz culture to Europe from America further led to the growth of Flappers.

Feminism was part of a free-ranging spirit of rebellion at the turn of the century. It severed the woman's movement from Christianity and conventional respectability. It was part of the broader *"revolt against formalism"* (Allen 7) in American culture. These new feminists were determined to "realize personality," to achieve self-determination through life, growth, and experience. As Charlotte Perkins Gilman described her:

> *Here she comes, running, out of prison and off the pedestal; chains off, crown off, halo off, just a live woman* (Allen 32).

Hobsbawn in his work The Age of Empire (1987) dedicates an entire chapter on the emergence of the ‘new woman’ during 1875-1914 in the “developed” world. Hobsbawn notes the decline in birth and death rates and the spread of birth control as important factors for the change in women’s lives and feelings.

Now that there was a higher standard of living, the women started expecting different things from life. Growing industrialization produced *“a new kind of complementarity”* between men and women, as the wives mostly stayed at home whilst the men became bread winners (27). To Hobsbawn, it does not matter much why the ‘new woman’ emerged; it was a natural consequence of a capitalist society where the woman needed to be treated with greater respect since she decided on the household purchases. She took up the economic factors; the changing position of women mostly had to do with a transforming economy. The altering divide of gender roles for her is more of an economic consequence than a cultural and societal construction.

Barbara Marx Hubbard is also a powerful advocate for the evolution of women. Her compelling vision of planet earth's "future female" indicates new roles, new functions and new capabilities for all women. She envisages the evolution of the feminine and the rise of what she calls the "*supra-sexual co-creative impulse",* an emerging evolutionary force that is reshaping the innate capacities and creative expression of women everywhere (7).

STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In India, the situation was entirely different from the West. Indian woman was subjugated since ages. She was under the authority of man. Medieval India was not women's age and it was supposed to be the 'dark age' for them. The Hindu moral code known as "The Laws of Manu" denies woman an existence apart from that of her husband. Since the publication of Bankim Chander Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife* in 1864, a significant number of authors have portrayed Indian women as long-suffering wives and mothers silenced by patriarchy:

> *"The ideal of the traditional, oppressed woman persisted in a culture permeated by religious images of virtuous goddesses devoted to their husbands. The Hindu goddesses, Sita and Savitri continued to be the powerful cultural ideals for women. In mythical terms, the dominant feminine prototype is the chaste, patient, self-denying wife, Sita, supported by other figures such as Savitri, Draupadi and Gandhari"* (3).

When looking at these narratives, one can say that silence and tolerance were the main tools with women to live under patriarchal hegemony. In Indian patriarchal society, a husband was considered God, however, cruel and indifferent he may be. She had been taught since her childhood that she has to obey her husband and family. Her parents offered her no chance to think about her identity. Different factors were responsible for woman subjugation. They can be categorized as social, cultural, traditional, and so on. Culture and society had imposed many kinds of norms on her and she was supposed to follow them religiously, she did not have the right to cross the "Laxaman Rekha".

Many foreign conquests resulted in the decline in women's status. The Muslim invaders brought with them their own culture. For them, woman was the sole property of her father, brother or husband and she did not have any will of her own. This type of thinking also crept into the minds of Indian people and they also began to treat their own women like this. The Indians wanted to shield their women folk from the barbarous Muslim invaders. Polygamy was a norm for these invaders and they picked up any women they wanted and kept her in their "harems". So, in order to protect themselves, Indian women started using *'Purdah',* (a veil), which covers body. Due to this reason their freedom was lost. They were not allowed to move freely and this led to the further deterioration of their status. These problems related with women resulted in changed mindset of people.

Now they began to consider a girl as misery and a burden, which has to be protected from the eyes of intruders and needs extra care.

A boy child will not need such extra care and instead will be helpful as an earning hand. Thus, a vicious circle started in which woman was at the receiving end. All this gave rise to some new evils such as *Child Marriage, Sati, Jauhar* and restriction on girl education. In some of the Rajput clans of Rajasthan, newly born girl child was dropped in a large bowl of milk and was killed. Today with the help of technology, the sex of the unborn baby is determined and if it is a girl child then it is aborted down. As compared to Hindu society other societies such as Buddhism, Jainism and Christians were a bit lenient. Women in those societies enjoyed far more freedom. They had easy access to education and were more liberal in their approach. According to these religions, gender was not the issue in attaining salvation. Any person whether a man or a woman was entitled to get the grace of God. During the time of king Ashoka, women took part in religious preaching. *According to Hiuen Tsang, Rajyashri, the sister of Harshavardhana was a distinguished scholar of her time. Another such example is the daughter of king Ashoka, Sanghmitra. She along with her brother Mahendra went to Sri Lanka to preach Buddhism* (25).

Sexism is the major factor responsible for female subjugation in the society. In Indian society the birth of a girl child is not welcomed. Sexual abuse and flesh trade are growing evils which threaten the existence of women.

In the wake of Raja Ram Mohan Roy's movement against women's subjugation to man and British influence on Indian culture and civilization, Gandhiji supported the cause of woman. To quote Gandhiji;

> *To call woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength meant brute strength, then, indeed, is woman less brute than man…"* (4).

Simone De Beauvour in her book *The Second Sex* claims that it is the whole process by which femininity is manufactured in society. She writes, *"Throughout her childhood the little girl suffered bullying and curtailment of activity; but the less she felt herself to be an autonomous individual"* (4).

START OF WAVE OF FEMINISM IN INDIA WITH POST COLONIAL NOVELISTS

In the post colonial era, the portrayal of women in Indian novel in English underwent a radical change. The conventional ideal woman who meekly tolerated traditional, domestic and sexual oppression and whose mouth was muzzled, voice arrested and movements fettered by patriarchal norms and control, was replaced by the "new woman" who started resisting traditions, orthodox concepts and values. Western feminism sought to change human consciousness about male dominance. To do so, they had to create a community of women in struggle against patriarchy. They found such a community in the suffrage movement. They reacted against the emphasis in the Woman's Movement on female nurturance, selfless service, and moral uplift. The Woman's movement stressed woman's duties while feminists reinvigorated demands for women's rights. It demanded the removal of social, political and economic discrimination based on sex and sought rights and duties on the basis of individual capacity alone.

Raja Rao in his novel *Kanthapura* (1938) presented an old woman as the chief protagonist who gives vivid details about casteism, religion, British rule, illiteracy, landlords, moneylenders, child marriages. There is a Brahmin quarter, a weaver quarter, a Sudra quarter, a pariah quarter for the untouchables. Many Indian women novelists have explored female subjectivity in order to establish an identity that is not imposed by a patriarchal society. Nayantara Sahgal uses this theme as the nucleus of *Rich Like Us* (1986).

R. K. Narayan has based his novel *The Dark Room* (1938) on theme of the theme of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879). The approach is humanistic and feministic. Nora and Savitri both are ordinary house wives belonging to middle class living with safe and protected life under the roof of husband's house completely and heartily devoted to the service of family and children. The moment of new realization comes and they turn into totally different, revolting personalities. Nora succeeds in revolting against her subordinate status and walks out not to return. Savitri revolts but returns defeated. R.K. Narayan has also highlighted the woman class and sufferings of the emerging class of Indian women. Rosie, in *The Guide* (1958) has been born into a family of traditional dancers. In order to get out of the inhuman circle of caste and birth and the stigmas attached to it, she gets herself educated and has a Master's degree in Economics.

In the field of regional fiction, four women writers, Arundhati Roy, Anita Nair, Kamala Das, and Susan Viswanathan have given us new women protagonists, who are educated, modern and question the traditional customs and traditions. The image of women in fiction has undergone a change during the last four decades. Women writers have moved away from traditional portrayals of enduring, self-sacrificing women toward conflicted female characters searching for identity, no longer characterized and defined simply in terms of their victim status. In contrast to earlier novels, female characters from the 1980s onwards assert themselves and defy marriage and motherhood.

IMPACT OF FREUDIAN THEORIES OF PSYCHOANALYSIS ON POST COLONIAL WRITERS

The conspicuous feature of the Indian fiction written after the post-world war is the deflation of self. The psycho-analytical theories of self, devaluation of self, neurosis, sexual repression and nausea given by Dr Karen Horney in *Neurosis and Human Growth* (1950) and Freud in *Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* (1953-1957), published in three volumes, impacted greatly on the post-colonial writers such as Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Bharti Mukherjee, Kamala Dass, Kiran Desai, Manju Kapoor and Rupa Bajwa.

Anita Desai's novels represent a unique self-gratification and self-fulfillment. In the face of this dual onslaught, her female protagonists, Maya, Sita, Monisha and Amla; Sarah, Nanda and Tara are seen striving for existence. As a writer, Anita Desai exhibits a strong inclination towards the existentialist interpretation of the human predicament. In particular, she voices "*the mute miseries and helplessness of married women tormented by existentialist problems and predicaments"* (Prasad 1991) Being a woman novelist, Desai has won a niche by exploring the emotional world of women, bringing to light the various deeper forces at work in feminine sensibility as well as psychology. This predilection leads her to examine the psyche of her women protagonists when they are confronted with the absurdity of life.

Quest for the definition of self and search for identity are the main features of the women of Bharti Mukherejee who are seen caught in the flux of conventional and contemporary. Neither can they completely detach themselves from their past, nor do they have any certitude in the future. Bharati Mukherjee advocates many faces of feminism encompassing agitation for equal opportunity, sexual liberty and right of self determination.

Kamla Das, who is well known for her poems, has also written two novels *The Alphabet of Dust* and *A Doll for the Child Prostitute.* The theme of her novels is again the search for identity in male-dominated society. The suffering women allow themselves to be sexually exploited in their passion for emancipation and search for identity. Her autobiography *My Story* is a harrowing tale of her struggle for emancipation and search for identity.

Shashi Deshpande focuses on the working of psyche of her female characters. The five women protagonists of her novels - Indu, Saru, Jaya, Urmila and Sumi find themselves trapped in the roles assigned to them by the society .They desperately struggle to assert their individuality. Sensitive to the changing times and situations, they revolt against the traditions.

Namita Gokhale has penned down a total of five novels in English. Her first novel *Paro: Dreams of Passion* which appeared in 1984 was a skit upon the Delhi and Mumbai elites. Next novel titled *Gods Graves and Grandmother* was an ironic fable on the street life of Delhi and it was later modified into a musical play. In her novel *Shakuntala: the Play of Memory* (2005), Gokhale depicts the struggle of Shakuntala against the patriarchal norms that tries to suppress and extinguish her identity.

NEW WOMAN IN INDIA: A CONCEPT AND REALITY

The birth of "new woman" in India is a reality as the concept and position of womanhood has changed in the modern context. Attitudinal shift can be seen in the woman who longer shies away from taking the initiatives. Though this new change in thought has its variables, the results are relative depending upon the individual. This new woman is an assimilation of western influences as well as her native culture. She is a hybrid who despite of all kinds of upheavals, is able to strike a balance among diverse spheres of her life. The post-colonial modern novelists depict a "new woman" in their fiction, the woman who is the product of modern mercantile society, one who revolts against the traditional social set up. There is a consistent growth in her behavior and attitude. Thus, the journey of such woman becomes a case study of feminism.

The present study proposes to explore the new women presented in the select novels of Mahashweta Devi, Manju Kapur, Rupa Bajwa and Shobha Dee. All domains of her growth, social, political and psychological shall remain the focus of our investigation. The new image of women presented by novelists under study is ambitious, lustful, power

hungry and bold. They use sex as weapon to win and mould men to their viewpoint and get the better of them. This evolving new image of women has created a crisis in family and society and has shaken the foundations of age-old institutions like marriage and motherhood. Pre-marital sex, fornication, extra-marital relations or divorce are no longer considered to be a taboo. The concept of ideal Indian woman has become out-dated. A modern woman is career-oriented because she knows that it is her economic dependence which empowers a male to dominate his wife and subject her to physical and mental torture.

A BRIEF ABOUT WRITERS UNDER STUDY:

MAHASHWETA DEVI'S AESTHETICS OF ACTIVISM

With Mahashweta Devi (1956- present) a celebrated Indian writer and tireless activist, a new wave of activism started in the post-colonial India. Born in Dhaka British India, she took up the cause of the subaltern tribal women and brought to the forefront a new woman who was fiery, revolting and struggled to find new tools of survival in a harsh social system. The literary works of Mahasweta Devi have given Indian literature a novel life and has worked relentlessly to bring consciousness and responsiveness in Indian women. A celebrated writer and tireless activist, Devi has worked for the emancipation and empowerment of tribal women. Her novel *Rudali* (1993) brought her immense fame. Rudali, meaning *"the crier",* is the term used to identify women of a low caste in the state of Rajasthan who perform mourning dances and songs at the funerals of higher caste men. Little information exists on these women, particularly in terms of scholarly research that involves direct observation of the lives of rudali women and the mourning songs and dances they perform. Devi describes the lives of her characters with such vivacity that it appears almost as ethnography of the women. As is detailed in the novel, Rudali's mourning performances include expressions of weeping and wailing and singing praises of the dead, "rolling on the ground and beating one's head…and one's breast" (10). Devi's story is a commentary on class differences in the region and the hypocrisy of what is deemed acceptable culturally for people of different castes.

KAPUR'S PREPETUAL DISCOURSE ON EDUCATION, MARRIAGE AND POLYGAMY

Manju Kapur (1998-present), an internationally acclaimed Indian woman novelist has penned down five novels. She earned worldwide fame and recognition through her very first novel *Difficult Daughters* (1998). It also won her the **Commonwealth Prize 1999** for first novels (Eurasia Section) and was a number one bestseller in India. Her second novel *A Married Woman* (2003) was called *'fluent and witty'* in the ***Independent***, while her third, *Home* (2006) has been described as *'glistening with detail and emotional acuity'* in the ***Sunday Times.*** The *IMMIGRANT (2008) and CUSTODY (2011) are her most recent novels.*

Manju Kapur takes into account the complexity of life, different histories, cultures and different structures of values in her plots. Her women under the patriarchal pressure and control are subjected to physical torture and social ostracism. They are more discriminated and are biased in lieu of their sex. But her heroines do not want to be rubber dolls in society rather they continuously strive to assert their identity. The key issues investigated by Kapur in her novels are education, marriage, and polygamy.

In *Difficult Daughters***,** there are two kinds of women-traditional women like Kasturi, Ganga and Kishori Devi, the "New women" like Viramati, Shankutla, Swaranlata and Ida. The traditional women described in the book are covered by the clouds of ignorance, but the "New Women" are enlightened, they are constantly engaged in a battle against ideological imposition and power oppressions of patriarchal system but finally come out with what they claim to achieve. The novel centers on the complex mother-daughter relationship.

A Married Woman and *Home* deal with new women protagonists. They give us revolutionary themes, the plot centers on a woman's obsession with love and lesbianism. Here, 'new woman" is bold and modern in perspectives. She is job oriented, rebellious, educated and thoughtful.

So, Manju Kapur has explored all the traits of a new woman in the protagonists of her three novels: *Difficult Daughters* (1998) *A Married Woman* (2002) and *Home* (2003). Manju Kapur's heroines are mostly educated, aspiring individuals caged within the confines of a conservative society. Their education leads them to independent thinking for which their family and society become intolerant of them. They struggle between tradition and modernity. The novelist has portrayed her protagonists as a woman caught in the conflict between the passions of the flesh and a yearning to be a part of the political and intellectual movements of the day.

RUPA BAJWA'S DEPICTION OF SUPPRESSION TO LIBERATION

Rupa Bajwa (2004- present), a prolific Indian writer hailing from Punjab, published her debut novel *The Sari Shop* in 2004**.** The world of critics and reviewers warmly welcomed the work with pleasing reviews with reviewers calling her *"India's new literary find."* Bajwa was honored with Grinzane Cavour Prize for best first novel and the Commonwealth Award in 2005. The novel also won *India's Sahitya Akademi Award English 2006. The Sari Shop has been translated in several languages, among them French (Le vendeur de saris),* Dutch *(De Sariwinkel)* and Serbian *(Prodavnica sarija).*

With Bajwa, woman assumes new identity. Her introspective and psychological settings reveal the subconscious and unconscious world of psyche of her women characters. All her female characters are sensitive, self –conscious, brilliant and creative. Her women protagonists' revolt against labeled roles assigned to them by the society. The new woman emerges out of her, in context of her socio-cultural ethos and values prevailing in the society. The image of woman and her roles determine her predicaments and adjustments in her relevant world. The new woman as a professional also faces conflicts and challenges against her career, inside and outside her home. 'Sudha' is a representative of an obedient and calm Indian woman. 'Mrs Sandhu' epitomizes "power psychology". 'Rina Kapoor' is assertive and ambitious, willing to discover her real self. She is a career oriented woman who wants to brighten her future by writing. 'Kamla' represents a life from suppression to liberation. The title 'Sari Shop' is symbolical. Sari can be a metaphor for the lives of Indian women-an expression of grace, modesty and exoticness.

EMERGENCE OF NEW URBAN WOMAN IN SHOBHA DE'S FICTION

Shobha De, (1989- present), a model cum journalist, is hailed as the ultra modern writer in Indian literary world. Apart from being the author of so many novels like *Socialite Evenings* (1989), *Starry Nights* (1991), *Spouse: the truth about marriage, Uncertain Liaisons* (1993) and *Strange Obsession* (1992)**,** she has also been the writer of many admired soaps on television, including India's second daily serial, *Swabhimaan.*

Shobha De depicts for the first time a new urban woman. Her novels and essays shatter patriarchal hegemony. People regard women inferior to men because of their different

sex. She seems to be gifted with extraordinary ability to discuss very sensitive aspects of human life tactfully. In fact as a writer, she differs considerably from other Indian women novelists writing in English. She believes in very frank telling of incidents and absolute open-heartedness. We don't find anything reserved in her fiction from narrative point of view. The orthodox people in India criticize her for her open discussion on sexual matters. Despite of all criticism, her fiction has got tremendous response not only from several European countries but all over the world. It is no less an achievement.

Her treatment of the contemporary urban woman's position and the challenges she faces, is not without significance. In an interview with Dr Nayar, she says, "I did write with a great deal of empathy toward women, without waving the feminist flag. I feel very strongly about the woman's situation" (138)

Shobha De has become the symbol of highlighting different perspectives of woman's freedom and liberation. She conceives the extra-marital affairs of women as the stroke to break the traditional and moral values in society. This is one of the most important aspects of her feminism. Her women are daring and courageous in establishing extra-marital affairs to satisfy their natural urge. These women are not hesitant in using sex as calculated strategy to get social and financial benefit. Marriage for them is an insurance against social values.

Her novels can be thematically classified into three groups: firstly, *Socialite Evenings* and *Second Thoughts* are the novels that deal with the themes such as Family, Marriage, Patriarchy, quest for Identity, struggle for survival and marginality.

Secondly, *Starry Nights, Sisters* and *Strange Obsession* (1992) move around the life in film industry, Bollywood and concentrate basically on lust and sex. And finally, the novels *Sultry Days* (1994) and *Snapshots* (1995) present the emancipation of women and project the ultra-modern life style of neo-rich people

Shobha De's elite and educated women of the upper class family are trapped in the social institution of the marriage and family for the sake of money and honor as seen in *"Socialite Evenings"***.** As the story unfolds the life of these women, we find the sexual liberties of Anjali who at last seeks solace in religion after her second marriage with Kumar, an impotent and incompatible man; the gorgeous and vivacious Ritu who has developed flirting into a fine art and who leaves her second husband for a smuggler. Karuna's disappointment with her husband nourished her fantasy of a liberated woman.

De's *Starry Nights* is the story of the struggle and survival of a woman in a sex-starved society. It focused on women's struggle for recognition and survival and made them realize that the time has come when they should stop suffering silently in helplessness. She has marvelous understanding of the psyche of women. There are mainly three women characters, Geetha Devi, Malini, Aasha. All these women struggle for their inordinate ambitions with all their strength in male dominated society. In their efforts to assert themselves, sometimes they turn the applecart of patriarchal order upside down. They retaliate, revolt and shape their destiny by living for themselves. They *"don't believe in suffering submissively, they leave no stone unturned to reach the peak of joy and success. Brimming with hope and zeal, they lay hands on hope in starry nights of their life. Their crusade against slavery, oppression and exploitation is alarming"* (Syal 59)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Shahid Amin and Dipesh Chakrabarty *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society* Vol. 9, 1996. Print.

In this book, the critics discuss and analyze social activism of Mahasweta Devi who intends to bring drastic changes in society through fiction. Her creativity ostensibly springs from and targets the tangible and the non tangible aspects of subaltern reality. This concern comprises, informs and patterns her narrative worldview. Her protagonists, in their everyday demeanor, find themselves pitch forked into multifarious, contradictory and multiple dynamics at the cross-section of the margins and the mainstream.

Floya Anthias and and Nira Yuval-Davis *Racialized Boundaries: Race, Nation, Gender, Colour and Class and the Anti-Racist Struggle* 1992. Print.

In this book, the writers discuss the gender politics in India and the contribution of Mahasweta Devi through her vigorous aesthetics. The very act of writing by women becomes not only an act of identity and empowerment but also a gesture of non-cooperation, rebellion, resistance and transgression.

Usha Bande and Atma Ram *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society* Vol. 9, 1996. Print.

Usha Bande a prominent critic talks about the impact of binary oppositions on post colonial fiction. The stories and novels of Mahasweta Devi are largely premised upon a series of binary oppositions, such as colonizer/colonized, imperialism/nationalism, man/woman and public/private. In this hierarchy of the colonizer and colonized culture, the women are branded as a deviant/disruptive group both socially and culturally. In such binaries, one term forcefully governs the other. Mahasweta's fiction aims at inverting such hegemony i.e. over-privileged, ever-signifying system of relationships and attempts to bring low what was high through the strategies of subversion and reversal. Her fiction depicts the sufferings of the subaltern women.

Ashok Kumar *Novels of Manju Kapur* 2010. Print.

Manju Kapur shot into fame with her debut *novel Difficult Daughters* (1998*). A Married Woman* (2002), *Home* (2005), and *The Immigrant* (2008), and *Custody (*2011), Kapoor's novels have a feministic approach. The present collection comprises of scholarly research papers and articles presenting an analysis of her novels as a struggle for emancipation

from economic political and social bondages. But the present book does not explore the issues concerning the new woman.

Nadia Ahmed *The Road to Baghdad, or Traveling Biculturalism: Theorizing a Bicultural Washington* 2005. Print.

In this book, Nadia Ahmad discusses about tradition and modernity in the post-partition fiction of India. She observes that in Atta Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961) and Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* (1998) women protagonists suffer because of the partition and its aftermath. Binary opposition between tradition and modernity is a major force, two antagonistic poles obliterating the lives of the protagonists.

Letizia Alterno *Post liberalization Indian Novels in English: Politics of Global Reception and Awards* 2013. Print.

In this book, Alterno focuses on those Indian writers writing in the English language, whose concerns are related to India in her immediacy, and who have come attained literary fame in the post-liberalization period. Although the idea of this study is not to undermine the value of these writers, its aim is to consider the correlation of their novels' themes with the workings of the organized, global market processes now present in post-liberalized India. As per Alterno, Manju Kapur has based her novel ***Difficult Daughters*** on issues including impact of globalization, nationalism, Diaspora, identity crisis, communalism, subaltern representation and modernism

Suman Bala and Subhash Chandra "Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughters: an Absorbing Tale of Fact and Fiction" pp 105-110, 1999. Print.

In this essay, Suman Bala argues that Kapur's fiction allows for the re-imagination of women's conditions during communal riots, and their responses to trauma as a result of those riots. This essay examines women's negotiations of their religious and national identities within the private and the public and their responses to trauma caused by communal violence through Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman* and Anita Rau Badami's *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?*

Elleke Boehmer "First realize your need: Manju Kapur's Erotic Nation" *Alternative Indias: Cultural Diversity in Contemporary Literature in English* pp. 53-70, 2005. Print.

In this essay, the learned critic discusses the themes and motifs of Manju Kapur's novels. While her first novel *Difficult Daughters* is a family saga against the historical backdrop of partition, her second novel *A Married Woman* (2002) is a work of investigative reporting on the most controversial and political issue of the demolition of Babri Masjid and a woman's obsession with love and lesbianism. The novel is a kind of narrative on a woman's incompatible marriage and resultant frustration and the contemporary political turmoil in its historical context.

Urbashi Barat "From Victim to Non-Victim: Socialite Evenings as a Version of Kunstlerroman" *The Fiction of Shobha De* pp. 119-128, 2000. Print.

In this book, Ms. Urbashi discusses how Shobha Dee is a trend setter. She becomes the symbol of highlighting different perspectives of woman's freedom and liberation. She conceives the extra-marital affairs of women as thse stroke to break the traditional and moral values in society. This is one of the most important aspects of her feminism.

Geeta Barua "Rise & Fall of a Star: a Study of Starry Nights" *Indian Women Novelists* Set III, Vol.1, pp. 199-202, 1995. Print.

Geeta Barua has given an interesting analysis of Shobha Dee's novel *Starry Nights.* Her women protagonists suffer because they flout the traditional morality in their desperate quest for success in life. Her women characters are very good specimens who openly establish that reversal of roles are indeed possible for women in the present day society. These multiple shades of woman's mind and plight are dealt in this book effectively.

Sarah Grimke *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Conditions of Woman* p.10, 1970. Print.

Sarah Grimke in this book rightly appreciates the spirit of remonstration in the novels of Shobha De from Socialite Evenings to recent one. She exhibits her feminist approach towards the recognition of partiality against the ideology and principles structured for women. Rightly for the female of the third world, feminism means a rebellion wherein she struggles to achieve a racial, social, economic, moral, intellectual and spiritual equality with man.

Mirabai K. "Tradition and Modernity: The Portrayal of Women by Women Writers" *Indian Women Novelists* Vol.1, p.41, 1991. Print.

Ms. Mirabai observes that Shobha De's women are strivers and aspire towards freedom, towards goodness and towards a compassionate world. Their virtue is a quality of heart, mind and spirit. It is a kind of untouched innocence and integrity.

Ningthoujam Sonia *Image of the New Woman in the Novels of Shobha De* p.102, 1997. Print.

In her book, Sonia talks about a new class of women created by Shobha De. These women protagonists are unique as they realize that they too have their own individual likes and dislikes. They want their voice to be heard in the society. Whether the voices of these women are received by attentive or deaf ears is not what matters. What indeed matters is that a new class of women has come up which is ready to take on the world to promote the women's perspective. But the writer has not fully explored the various aspects of this new class of women.

Sharad Srivastava *The New Woman in Indian English* pp. 81-100, 1996. Print.

In pages 81-100, Sharad Srivastava explores the growth of the new woman through the novels of Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Namita Gokhale and Shobha De. The 'new woman' is not merely an aggregate of certain personality traits to be studied through the methodology of social sciences. She is a being in her won right who is in the process of becoming. She seeks self-fulfillment through self-expression in a milieu where there is support, kind consideration and tenderness. In this sense the 'new woman' is different from the modern woman whose prime concerns are dominance and self-assertion.

Pushpinder Syal "Powders, Puffs and Shobha De's Fiction: The Novel as Consumer Product" *Contemporary Indian Women Writers in English: A Feminist Perspective* 1999. Print.

In the chapter mentioned above, Professor Syal highlights the important aspects of existence and survival in high class society of India. The woman protagonists of Shobha De use the tools of powders, puffs and patches to survive in a harsh materialistic world.

Ragunath Ghosh *Facets of Feminism: Studies on the Concept of Woman In Indian Tradition* 2005. Print.

The present work explores Indian tradition starting from the Vedic period to modern times in terms of education, social, political, legal rights of woman. An endeavor has been made to show the status of woman in the eyes of the contemporary thinkers like Gandhiji, Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath. Their interpretations on tradition about woman have also been illumined.

Alice Jardine *Gynesics: Configurations of Women and Modernity* p. 25, 1986. Print.

Alice Jardine rightly in page 25 of her book remarks about the various problems occurred in the life of women because of their being a different sex. "*The putting into discourse of 'woman' as that process diagnosed is intrinsic to modernity; indeed the valorization of the feminine, woman and her obligatory, that is historical, connotations, as somehow intrinsic to new and necessary modes of thinking, writing and speaking.*"

K. A. Kunjakkan *Feminism and Indian Realities* 2002. Print.

This book is primarily on the Indian situation in the context of feminism with special reference to the status of Indian women through the ages and the external influences that have been transforming their life style in modern India.

It is concluded that all above mentioned critical books, research papers and articles do not address to the problem taken in this study. There is no elaborate work on the evolution and emergence of new woman in the post partition era. Hence the proposed study entitled *"Emergence of New Woman: A New Feministic Approach in The Select Novels of Mahasweta Devi, Manju Kapur, Rupa Bajwa and Shobha De"* will add a new milestone in the history of literary criticism.

OBJECTIVES

The proposed study " *Emergence of New Woman: A New Feministic Approach in the Select Novels of Mahashweta Devi, Manju Kapoor, Rupa Bajwa and Shobha De*" plans to explore the various socio-political causes which led to the emergence of a "New Woman" in India on the model of Western Flappers. Her quest for identity, her social and political awareness was due to the scientific and technological advancement in the post- Independence India. The spread of education and propagation of western culture inspired Indian women to shun the patriarchal shackles and assert their independence. New values and cultural changes brought about by urbanization changed the mindset of women. The concept of welfare state and new rights enshrined in Indian Constitution further led to women empowerment.

The critical and exhaustive investigation of the select novels of Mahashweta Devi, Manju Kapur, Rupa Bajwa and Shobha Dee will open new dimensions, themes and issues adding new interest to the students engaged in post-colonial research. There are many books and critical research papers on these writers but the critics of past and present have not so far fully explored the socio economic and socio- political forces which led to the emergence of a "new woman" in the post-colonized society. Reinterpretation of issues concerning the women protagonists of Mahasweta Devi, Manju Kapur, Shobha De and Rupa Bajwa will be an addition to critical literature.

Precisely, the present research shall have the following objectives:

- To study etymology of phrase 'new woman' & its usage in western context and outline the position of Indian woman from historical perspective.
- To critically investigate the psychoanalytical theories of Dr. Karen Horney and Sigmund Freud and study their impact on post colonial writers as well as writers under study.
- To make a comparative interpretation of new woman presented in the novels of Mahasweta Devi, Rupa Bajwa and Manju Kapoor and Shobha De, in the light of theories propounded by western feminists like Kate Millet, Elaine Showalter, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Simone de Beauvoir.
- To reconsider the emancipation of woman in India and arrive at the socio-political and socio-economic forces that emphasized the growth of this new urban woman.

The research will add new dimensions in the domain of feministic and cultural studies as the approach will be interdisciplinary and comparative.

IMPORTANCE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

In spite of the substantial contribution of Mahasweta Devi, Rupa Bajwa, Manju Kapur and Shobha De to Indian Novel in English, their novels have not been fully explored. In terms of research, they have remained completely neglected. As no elaborate work has been carried out on the issue of the emergence of the "new woman" in the works of post-colonial novelists therefore the purpose of this study is to fill in the lacuna and also to highlight how a new wave/ journey of feminism started with Mahasweta Devi and it assumed different forms and shades with Manju Kapur and Rupa Bajwa and reached its climax with Shobha De. The present study will make a rich contribution to the growing corpus of feminist literature and will further supply the aesthetic simulation to the scholars and researchers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Since this research is a critical and qualitative investigation of the feministic issues of the select novels of Mahasweta Devi, Rupa Bajwa, Manju Kapur and Shobha Dee, a qualitative research paradigm will be best suited to study and understand society which afflicted the women protagonists of the novelists and probe the socio-political and economic forces which brought about the emergence of new woman in the post-colonial Indian subcontinent. The study is primarily a textual examination of the theories on gender and class. The patriarchal and capitalist issues of western critics such as Sylvia Walby, Jane C. Ollenburger and Hellen A. Moor, Deniz Kandiyoti, and Allan G Johnson will be used to demonstrate the oppressive role of patriarchy in the analysis of the select novels of writers under study. The feministic theories of Simone de Beauvoir, Elaine Showalter and Susan Gubar will be investigated with reference to the texts of the select novelists.

This study will deal with

- Thematic analysis, procedures and justifications for the rhetorical artifact employed in the study and comparative analysis. Information will be collected from the famous research library of Osmania University Hyderabad.
- The old reviews of Research journals, newspapers and magazines will be consulted in the VTR section of Indo-American Center for International Studies, Hyderabad.
- The interviews of all these novelists will further broaden our understanding about their visions of life and the themes and issues discussed by them in their fiction.

The sources of the following libraries will be utilized to add new insights to the research work:

- American Library, 24 Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi
- Central Library of Punjab University.
- Library of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar
- Indo-American Center for International Studies, Hyderabad

Apart from qualitative exploration, some case studies on women from different strata of society shall constitute a part of our research methodology.

- Some of the tribal women who live and suffer under patriarchal set up of Jammu and Kashmir adhering to Muslim culture.
- Some of the women who are working as Pilots in Airways, in the Army and Police.
- Some of the women in India who are at the helm of the political affairs, governing the Village Panchayats and acting as District Magistrates shall be observed and interviewed.

The observation, investigation and deduction of the above case studies will highlight the emergence of New Woman in post independent India.

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